

**SEATAC PROCEDURES
AND
BIOTA REPORT GUIDELINES**

***COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING***

NOVEMBER 1993

SEATAC PROCEDURES

MEMBERSHIP: Seven members from the private and public sector with a range of expertise shall be appointed by the Planning Director to serve staggered three-year terms. The staff biologist from the Department of Regional Planning will serve as coordinator.

MEETINGS: First Monday of each month in Room 1385 of the Hall of Records at 1:00 p.m. The public is advised that the meetings **are not public hearings**. Therefore no testimony can be given at the meeting. The public will be allowed to submit written comments for consideration by SEATAC up to one week prior to the meetings. Notice of SEATAC meetings and minutes of those meetings shall be forwarded to the Regional Planning Commission. SEATAC minutes shall be made available for public hearings. Interested groups and individuals may subscribe to SEATAC agendas and minutes after paying an appropriate fee to cover costs. A representative of SEATAC shall brief the Regional Planning Commission at least once a year on its activities and present any suggestions it has at that time.

ATTENDANCE: Applicants are advised that the presence of the biota report preparer at the meeting is required as the discussion can be technical in nature and problems can be more readily resolved by direct interface between the preparer and SEATAC.

QUORUM: Three members, unless the project is identified by the Department of Regional Planning or SEATAC as a complex project requiring additional expertise.

SUBMITTALS: Submission of ten copies of a biota report is required. THE BIOTA REPORT MUST BE PREPARED BY A BIOLOGIST SELECTED FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING'S CERTIFIED LIST OF BIOLOGISTS. This list is reviewed annually.

FILING Submittals: 25 days prior to the first Monday of the following month.

DEADLINES: If a holiday occurs on the first Monday then submittals shall be 25 days prior to the second Monday.

*****Note:** A maximum of five (5) projects will be reviewed per meeting so filing prior to the deadlines is advised. The biota report will have been preceded by a biological constraints analysis submitted along with the Initial Study materials for review by the staff biologist at the time of application. Additional review of the biological constraints analysis by SEATAC may be requested by the staff biologist. The preparer of the biological constraints analysis shall also be from the Certified List of Biologists and shall follow the County Biological Constraints Analysis Guidelines.

ACTIONS: At the conclusion of the discussion of each project, SEATAC can approve the report as written, recommend changes in the report, and/or make recommendations

about the design or appropriateness of a project. Projects will be reviewed for conformity with SEA design criteria as set forth in the General Plan. Proposed plan amendments will be reviewed upon their merits. Applicants seeking approval of the reports are not required to reappear before SEATAC more than twice. SEATAC shall complete a recommendation on each project by the close of the third SEATAC meeting on the project. An applicant can notify SEATAC that they no longer wish to attempt to obtain approval of the report and/or the project. In this case, SEATAC will prepare a memo to the Regional Planning Commission indicating its concerns and recommendation on the project. No action of SEATAC is final until the minutes of the meeting are approved, usually at the following meeting.

*****Note:** It is the policy of the Department of Regional Planning to generally require an Environmental Impact Report for all projects in SEAs (as defined in the Zoning Code). Planning staff shall rely largely on SEATAC comments in making environmental determinations on projects (i.e. EIR or ND) with respect to biotic impacts. If a Negative Declaration is recommended by staff, it shall be forwarded to the Regional Planning Commission for their review and determination prior to its completion.

Hearings on SEA projects will include advertising in a newspaper of regional as well as local circulation.

BIOTA REPORT GUIDELINES

REPORT FORMAT

Each of the ten (10) copies must comply with the following:

1. The reports shall be bound. The cover shall include the following information:
 - A. Project Number and Tract/Parcel Map Number (if applicable)
 - B. Date
 - C. Preparer of Report
2. All pages shall be numbered, including maps, exhibits, etc.
3. Include a completed Guideline Compliance Checklist (see Appendix A).
4. Include a copy of the Initial Study Questionnaire.
5. Maps, fold-outs, and loose items shall be clearly labeled with the project number and exhibit identification.
6. Loose items shall be enclosed in a sleeve or map pocket.
7. Provide an original, color, USGS quad sheet with the boundaries of the project plotted on it. Include the boundaries of nearby projects with project number and case summary (at least the case number, area, and number of lots). High quality color photocopy may be acceptable.
8. Provide site plans at a legible scale showing the maximum extent of the buildable sites with all required or anticipated roads, easements and driveways. A conceptual plan for all potential grading that would be required for pads, roads, driveways, etc. must be shown. This is required of projects where subdividing the land is the only action.
9. Provide ground-level color photographs of the project site with a photo key map showing location and direction of the photograph. Legible color photocopies are acceptable if they clearly depict the site.
10. Provide a high quality aerial photograph that is dated and less than one year old. Legible color photocopies are acceptable.
11. Flora lists shall be alphabetized by family, genera, species and variety of plants.
12. Fauna lists shall be in systematic order by family. Identify to subspecies level.
13. For sensitive species a matrix shall be prepared outlining any impacts (see Appendix B).

14. Provide a resume or statement of qualifications of all personnel responsible for preparing the report.

NOTE: In an effort to be environmentally sensitive, all biota documents should be double-sided and preferably be printed on recycled paper.

RESUBMITTAL FORMAT

TEN FINAL COPIES OF THE COMPLETE BIOTA REPORT WITH REVISIONS SHALL BE SUBMITTED FOR THE CASE RECORDS.

1. The cover of the report shall be identical to the initial submittal with an additional statement of "Supplemental Information Submitted To SEATAC At Their Request On (date).\" The revised date shall be beneath the previous date.
2. Include dividers, sections, or photographs explicitly stating that such material is a response to an issue or question raised. These responses shall be on colored sheets. The colored sheets will be placed directly behind the page that the response addresses. Use different colored sheets for future resubmittals. Each issue or question and its corresponding response shall be numbered in sequence.
3. If changes have been made to any maps, provide the delineation of the original project for comparison.

BIOTA REPORT REQUIREMENTS

NOTE: OMISSION OF ANY OF THESE SECTIONS MAY BE CAUSE FOR SEATAC TO RETURN THE BIOTA REPORT TO THE CONSULTANTS.

I. Project Description

- A. Location
- B. Size
- C. Project (number of lots, amount of grading)
- D. Permits requested (Zone Change, Plan Amendment, etc.)
- E. Summary of significant impacts (statement reiterating significant impacts of the project and referencing the pages of detailed discussion within the report)

II. Setting

A. Characteristics of the project site

- 1. Project description (size, number of lots, amounts of grading, etc.).
- 2. General description of habitats present.
- 3. Color aerial photographs of the project with boundaries delineated.
- 4. Color photographs of the project site with a key map.
- 5. Plot the location of major plant communities on the site plan.
- 6. Original U.S.G.S. topographical quad sheet.
- 7. Drainage patterns shall be identified.
- 8. Unusual or significant geological features shall be identified.

B. Characteristics of the surrounding area

- 1. General description of habitats and vegetation communities. Describe landscape/wildlife linkages.
- 2. Existing land use.
- 3. Identify public and private open space or reserves in the surrounding area.
- 4. Actual or potential wildlife movement and gene flow between surrounding open space and reserves to the project site.
- 5. Overall biological value (diversity, populations of taxa of special interest, etc.) of the project site and its context with adjacent lands.

C. Exhibits

- 1. Vicinity map of appropriate scale showing the subject property in relation to nearby streets and other significant geological or geographical landmarks.

2. Map of appropriate scale showing generalized land use on the project site and on surrounding properties to immediate adjoining parcels and/or any physical or biotic feature that affects adjacent drainage (watershed) patterns.
3. High quality photographs of the site, proposed pad locations, and surrounding areas indicating the site boundaries. The photographs must be keyed to a map of the site. All submittals shall contain original color photographs or equally legible color photocopies.

II. General Biota Survey and discussion of the project site

- A. Survey of the flora and vertebrate and butterfly fauna or other significant biota of the site must be completed.
- B. The surveys must adhere to the standard techniques expected by the CNDDDB, California Department of Fish and Game or other resource agency, if applicable.
- C. **Survey must be conducted during the optimum period for observing the taxa of concern.** For example spring for certain plants, birds, or insects; summer for mammals, etc. Surveys conducted between October 1 and March 1, in most cases, will need to be repeated and supplemented by Spring surveys.
- D. Survey must include a list of the butterfly fauna present on site. Due to the large number of invertebrate fauna present at any site and the extreme difficulty of identification, with the exception of butterflies, they do not have to be investigated except when specifically directed by the Department of Regional Planning.
- E. Dates and time periods spent on the site must be listed.
- F. Methods utilized must be given (e.g. walk through site utilizing binoculars; trapping for mammals, etc.)
- G. Personnel (names and addresses) involved in the field and laboratory work must be listed.
- H. Rough estimates of the population size of flora and fauna on the project site must be given. The terms rare, uncommon, common, and abundant shall be used as appropriate.
- I. Lists of species observed/collected/anticipated on the project site are to be included as an appendix to the Biota Report.
- J. A bibliography of the references used to complete the report is to be included.

K. A list of persons contacted and their institutional affiliations is to be included.

L. Proof of permits, or Memoranda of Understanding for trapping.

IV. Sensitive Species and Communities

A. All Endangered/Threatened/Rare species, unique species, or taxa of special concern to Local, State, Federal, or International Agencies, both on and anticipated to be on the project site must be considered.

B. When Endangered/Threatened/Rare/Unique/Special Concern species are identified on the site, their exact location and estimates of abundance must be given. The methods used to estimate population size must be given.

C. The California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base must be contacted regarding the presence of Endangered/Threatened/Rare/ Unique elements and/or plant communities of concern. The address of the Data Base is 1416 Ninth Street Room 1225, Sacramento, CA 95814. Copies of all correspondence are to be included with the Biota Report.

D. Written responses shall be expected from appropriate specialists on the identified SEA sensitive resources (e.g. freshwater ichthyologists knowledgeable about the unarmored three-spine stickleback for SEAs along the Santa Clara River, etc.).

V. Impacts - Any aspect of project implementation which affects natural biological resources or processes in the SEA; standards of significance criteria, before and after mitigation, and based on CEQA, NEPA, SEATAC, etc., will be defined and applied.

A. A map showing the relationship between major vegetative types and land alteration, including the location of cuts and fills for building pads as well as access roads must be provided. This may be the same map used for "Setting". The location of proposed grading and trees that will be removed is to be shown on this map.

B. The amount (volume) of proposed grading for building pads, roads, and driveways shall be determined. The acreage and percentage of the vegetation communities to be altered or graded shall be included. This will include accidental loss.

C. The number and species of significant trees (dbh greater than 6 inches) or all trees if the species is of special concern (e.g. *Quercus* species, etc.) shall be mapped. The effect of any damage resulting from development at the site is to be discussed.

D. Short and long term impacts to life history of all plant or animal species of special concern, or to any ecological cycles shall be discussed.

- E. The effect of the project on the integrity of the SEA shall be discussed.
- F. The effect of "brush" clearance on plant and animal species and on any ecological cycles is to be discussed. The ordinances and effective fuel clearance required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department shall be included.
- G. Potential damage to wildlife habitats and vegetation communities from accessory structures such as horse corrals, stables, trails, driveways, etc. shall be discussed.
- H. Provide an analysis of wildlife corridors and habitat linkages relevant to the SEA and surrounding open space.
- I. Discuss related projects and cumulative impacts (past, present, and future) including maps depicting project boundaries. The discussion must include downstream impacts to a logical distance.

V. Mitigation Measures

Specific mitigation measures which are to be incorporated into the project shall be discussed. Other mitigation measures that were considered must be included along with the reasons for rejection.

Mitigation measures may include but are not limited to the following:

- A. The acreage and percentage of the site that is to be left as natural open area shall be defined (as compared to "developed" area and areas in which ornamental non-native vegetation is to be introduced). In addition, the percentage of the undisturbed habitat areas within the subject site relative to the overall similar habitat area (such as an extension of grassland, woodland, etc.) must be given whenever possible.
- B. The relationship of the natural open area to the vegetation communities is to be discussed.
- C. Short and long term measures that will be taken to protect and manage the natural open areas (e.g. fencing giving conservation easements or deed to land trust, etc.) must be listed.
- D. The type and amount of landscaping is to be discussed. Plant taxa native to the immediate area shall be utilized unless infeasible.
- E. Relocation, generally, will not be an acceptable mitigation measure.
- F. Permissive language (e.g. "should, could") shall not be used.

VI. Monitoring Program

For each mitigation measure a monitoring program must be included. It shall address the standard to be met, timing, and the responsible party.

NOTE: OMISSION OF ANY OF THESE SECTIONS MAY BE CAUSE FOR SEATAC TO RETURN THE BIOTA REPORT TO THE CONSULTANTS.

Appendix A

GUIDELINE COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

	PREPARER'S INITIALS	PAGE
Setting	_____	_____
Original U.S.G.S. Topographical Quad Sheet (or color photocopy)	_____	_____
Project Site Photographs or Color Photocopies	_____	_____
Color Aerial Photographs	_____	_____
Biota Survey of the Project Site	_____	_____
Flora and Fauna Lists in Alphabetic/Systematic Order	_____	_____
Table of Sensitive Species Impacts Matrix	_____	_____
Document showing CNDDB Contact	_____	_____
Site/Grading Plans	_____	_____
Initial Study Questionnaire	_____	_____
Impacts	_____	_____
Mitigation Measures	_____	_____
Mitigation Monitoring	_____	_____
Preparers Resume/Qualifications	_____	_____